

UMSL welcomes students with Weeks of Welcome kickoff event

SIYUN ZHANG
STAFF WRITER

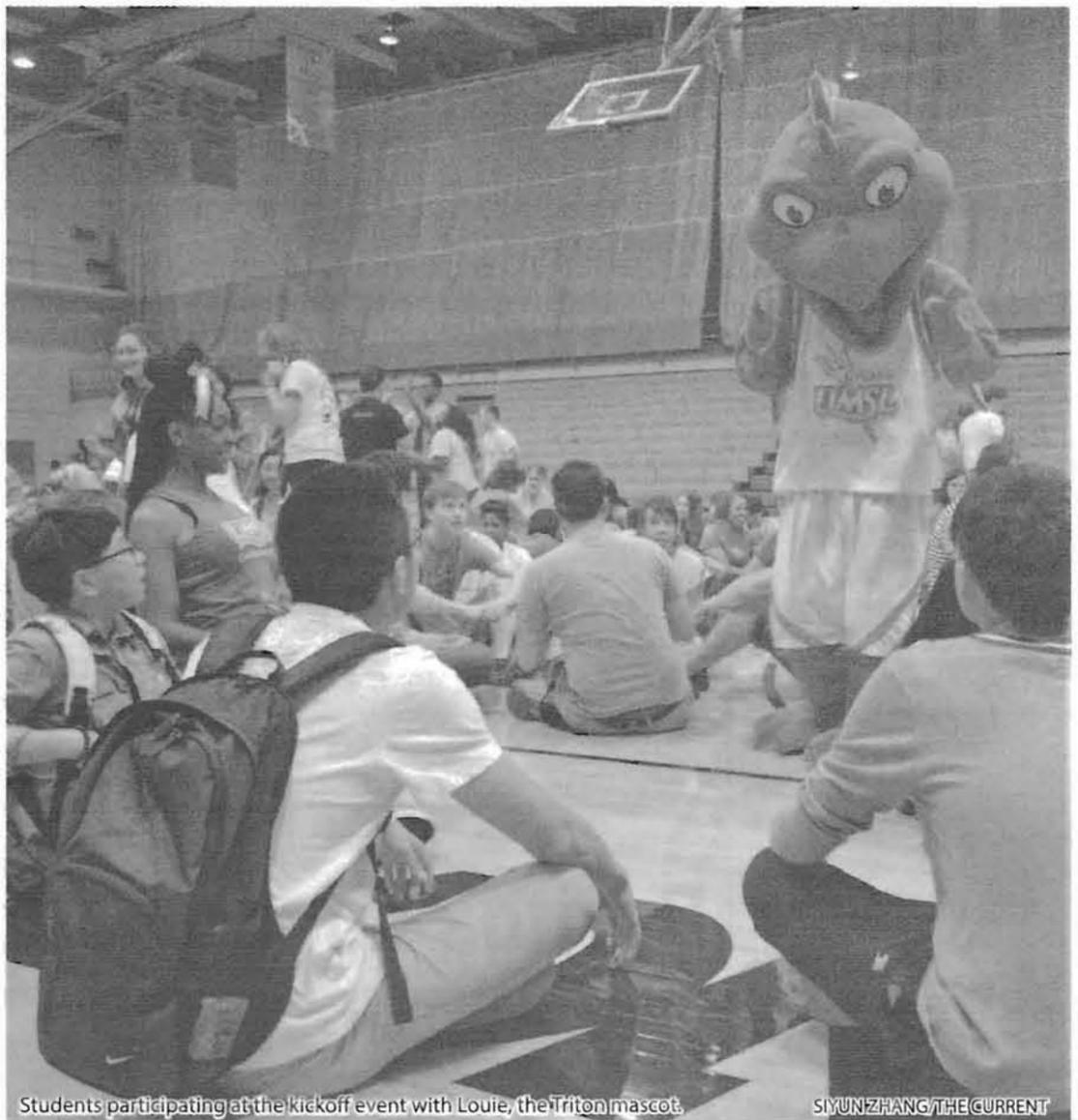
With the fall semester right around the corner, UMSL Office of Student Life and New Student Programs officially kicked off the academic year on Wednesday, Aug 14, at 6:30 pm with its Weeks of Welcome Kickoff Event. Held in the Mark Twain Recreation Center, the Weeks of Welcome Kickoff Event eased the transition into what will be for many students a brand-new, exciting, though uncertain, life in college.

Both new and returning Tritons were enthusiastically welcomed with cheers and high-fives. The event was a wonderful opportunity for new friends to be made among the Triton community. During the course of the evening, participants had the opportunity to join and break into different groups where they could introduce themselves and exchange personal information, such as hobbies and interests, majors, and year. Students also got acquainted with one another by playing several rounds of different games, effectively proving that laughter is a great way to break the ice. It wasn't long

before groups of strangers became groups of friends.

Students were also able to get their blood pumping by dancing together to the rhythm of energetic music. Students were then treated to an inspiring speech that encouraged them to carry out their wildest dreams and ambitious plans during their time at UMSL.

Various volunteers were present to help new students and to ensure that everything was ready. Megan Green, director of the Office of New Student Programs, announced a list of upcoming events scheduled to take place in the first six weeks of classes, known as Weeks of Welcome (WOW). According to Green, WOW will consist of a variety of events and activities that will be hosted by various departments, offices, and organizations on campus. There will be over one hundred events that will be taking place all over campus. For a full list of scheduled events, students can visit umsl.edu/wow and download the 2013 WOW Guide booklet. The booklets include other



Students participating at the kickoff event with Louie, the Triton mascot.

SIYUN ZHANG/THE CURRENT

helpful information and will be given out around campus on the first few days of classes.

The kickoff event was held not only to help students feel connected to campus life but provided a great opportunity for new Tritons to find out what it's like to be part of the UMSL campus community.

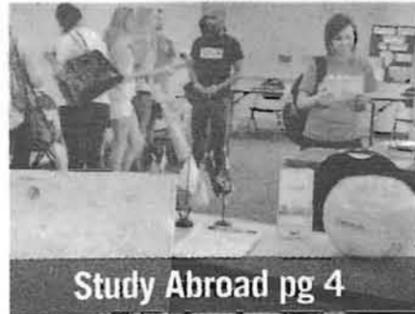
"[At the event,] I hope students meet people as many people as possible. We understand that those first few days, everyone is going through so many emotions, and we notice that there are many students not from Missouri, not even from the United States," Green said. "We hope attendees have a lot of fun and laughing at the same time."

Haomeng Ying, junior, business administration, is an international student from China and one of the many students mingling at the kickoff event. "I enjoyed this evening. I have met lots of nice people and [am excited to] make more friends," Ying said. "I'm excited that school is going to begin."

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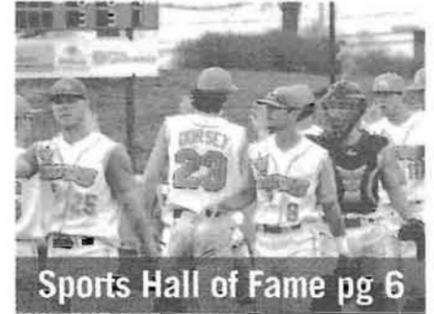
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What's Current

"What's Current" is the weekly calendar of UMSL campus events and is a free service for student organizations. Submissions must be turned in by 5 p.m. the Thursday before publication; first-come, first-served. Listings may be edited for length and style. E-mail event listings to thecurrenttips@umsl.edu, with the subject "What's Current." No phone or written submissions.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

UPB Welcome Week: Peace, Love and Popcorn

The University Programs Board invites students to socialize on campus, offering free t-shirts and a flavored popcorn bar. 11 a.m. at Quarters (in the Nosh), in the lower level of the Millennium Student Center. For Info: University Program Board at 314-516-5531.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20

UPB Welcome Week: Drive-In Movie: Now You See Me

This annual event encourages students to invite friends and family to UMSL for an outdoor screening of the summer movie hit "Now You See Me." Free admission includes popcorn and soda. 8 - 11 p.m. in MSC's Parking Lot D. For Info: University Program Board at 314-516-5531.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

Paintapalooza

Pierre Laclède Honors College Student Association is offering an evening of free food and paint-soaked excitement, with twister, slip-and-slide, balloon fights and art, all involving paint. 6 p.m. on the front lawn of Provincial House on South Campus. Wear clothing you don't mind covered in washable paint.

UPB Welcome Week: Fall Expo

Fall Expo is a way for students to become familiar with all the student organizations and departments on campus. Stop by and learn how you can get involved, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in North Campus Quad. There will be free stuff and the U Radio will be playing 80's music. For Info: University Program Board at 314-516-5531.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22

Open Mic

The University Singers invite students to listen or participate in Open Mic night. Bring your CDs and guitars, or sing karaoke with your iPod. Piano available, all genres welcome. 4-6 p.m., at the MSC Pilot House

UPB Welcome Week: KaZual

University Program Board present KaZual, a musical group with a unique and distinctive style. They utilize the acapella style to combine R&B, Rock and Pop, while also mixing in music and dancing. According to the UPB, their stage presence is electric and they impress audiences wherever they go. 7 p.m. at J.C. Penny Auditorium.

Fall Volunteer Fair

Fall Expo is a way for students to become familiar with local non-profit organizations looking for volunteers, interns, and practicum students, 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in North Campus Quad. For Info: Carly Nivison at 314-516-5538.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

UPB Welcome Week: Pool Party

UPB is hosting a pool party with free food, inflatables and prizes, 7-10 p.m. at the Oak Hall

Campus Crimeline

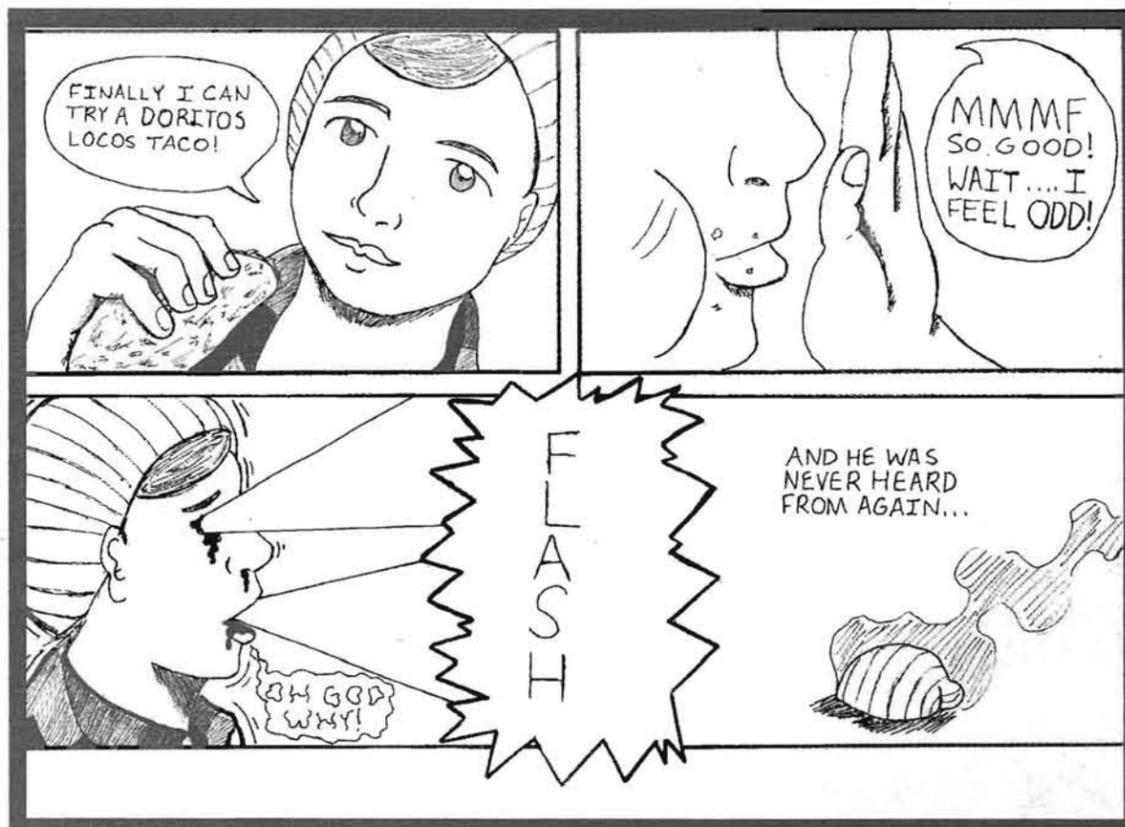
THEFT - LACLEDE LANE.

August 1, 2013 - Report # 13-329
 An UMSL student discovered a broken window on their parked car and reported a bag containing personal documents stolen. Disposition: Report taken.

THEFT - LOT E.

August 6, 2013 - Report # 13-333
 A cell phone was stolen by a passerby that asked to use a phone. Investigation continuing. Disposition: Report taken.

Doritos Locos Tacos by Gregory Hartl



HEY THERE!

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WEATHER

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 69^{LOW}

TUE 88^{HI}
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WED 90^{HI}
 71^{LOW}

THU 92^{HI}
 72^{LOW}

FRI 90^{HI}
 69^{LOW}

SAT 88^{HI}
 70^{LOW}

SUN 86^{HI}
 69^{LOW}

Center for Student Success renamed

ALBERT NALL
STAFF WRITER

For the fall semester, students may notice that there is a new department called Student Retention Services (SRS) on the University of Missouri- St. Louis campus. Student Retention Services was opened to replace the Center for Student Success after it closed this summer. The objectives, though, remain the same: accountability, support, and achievement.

David J. Lewis, senior project director of SRS, commented about the change and provided general details about the department. Lewis earned his master's degree in education from UM-St. Louis College of Education and had worked in Student Services at Xavier University in New Orleans, La. Before joining the UM- St. Louis staff.

The Current (TC): What are your goals for SRS?

David Lewis (DL): In terms of impact at UM- St. Louis, it is my hope to use my past ex-

periences in the field to (1) assess the needs of students; (2) develop services that aim to meet those needs; and (3) create high-impact service deliveries that will engage students needing services.

TC: How did the decision to make the change from the Center for Student Success to Student Retention Services come about? What is the message about the department's services that you want to pass to students, staff, and instructors?

DL: Through our dynamic approach, we provide students with a range of services that are supported by student development literature and national best practices for student success in post-secondary education. Students, faculty, and staff are all part of our mission, which is ultimately to create an environment of learning that supports development and encourages student persistence and degree completion.

TC: In looking through your website, there appears to be a

great emphasis on such things as "academic intervention," "academic probation," and "financial aid probation." This sounds almost like a strong "boot camp" approach to academic crisis. Is this the approach?

DL: In terms of our approach to retention, we are definitely not in the business of intimidating students. We are, however, committed to conveying the very important message of student success on the campus. These phrases simply reflect industry standard processes that institutions utilize to support student achievement. We are committed to working with students that may exhibit "at-risk" behaviors early in an academic term to help them to avoid financial aid or academic probation as well as those students who are already on financial aid or academic probation to help them develop clear and realistic plans for academic recovery.

TC: How can faculty be involved in the process?

DL: In terms of instructors

being involved, faculty members are actually critical to our proactive services because their courses and student evaluations serve as the initiating point for identifying an "at-risk" student. Through our Academic Alert program, faculty members are able to send SRS a message to address concerns that may result in course failure and students will have the opportunity to engage with faculty outside of the classroom through an interactive 411 workshop. We have connected with various faculty members across the campus to serve as our panel for this workshop and hope that students will be excited about participating!

TC: What are the types of crisis that plague students, and what are the chances that they will drop out due to this?

DL: In terms of "crisis," students face a variety of challenges that lead to academic crisis. At risk behaviors may include frequent absences from class, incomplete/missed assign-

ments, and signs of disengagement in course materials or in-class discussions just to name a few. Some of the common reasons students reach this point include under-preparedness for college level work, personal problems that may interfere with academic study, financial issues, as well as problems that stem from unsuitability of a selected major. A big part of our work in SRS is to assist students in identifying the issues that led them to academic crisis and create interventions and pathways that will help them to be successful.

TC: How will "Retention Services" bring at risk students back to "good standing" with the university?

DL: Our approach is simple – we work as an accountability partner with students to assist them in their success.

Student Retention Services is located in 225 MSC. For more information about Student Workshops and other resources contact SRS at (314) 516-5300.

New telescope donated to UMSL Observatory

HEATHER WELBORN
OPINION EDITOR

The Richard D. Schwartz Observatory has recently received the donation of a 16-inch telescope. The donation is a marked upgrade to the original 14-inch telescope on campus over 30 years ago. Since then, space viewing technology has modernized significantly. The new telescope is fully computer automated, and includes a GPS.

Among the items donated was a new specialized camera for digital astrophotography. The camera will be used alongside a spectrophotometer to collect data for student research in the astronomy and physics

departments. Such tools are invaluable to acquiring the data required for research and further academic and scientific application.

"The Schwartz observatory is primarily a teaching tool," says Bruce Wilking, Professor of Astronomy. Students declaring an astrophysics major are required to take an Observational Astronomy course. Research conducted at the observatory by students is funded through the NASA/Missouri Space Grant Consortium. Historically, data collected by students has been published in scientific journals.

The observatory founder, Dr. Richard Schwartz, was the only astronomer at the University of Missouri- St. Louis upon arriving in 1975. Since then, he

built the astronomy program, including the introduction of an astrophysics B.S, a path the majority of physics majors declare. Dr. Schwartz designed and oversaw the campus observatory, built in 1981, using it as both a research and educational facility.

Dr. Schwartz was at the front of a new research studying how young stars lose mass, using an array of specialized telescopes from around the world, including the Hubble Space Telescope and the International Ultraviolet Explorer. In his lifetime, he was cited over 2000 times in scientific papers, and received funding from both NASA and the National Science Foundation for nearly 20 years.

UMSL has previously partic-

ipated in a global astronomical collaboration to observe the behavior of active galactic nuclei. This monitoring was used to determine the size and process of a central black hole. Black holes themselves cannot be seen, they are inferred by observing how objects in a region are affected gravitationally.

Erika Gibb, Associate Professor of Astronomy, encourages students to experience stargazing on campus. Specifically, the comet ISON is coming to our inner solar system. "It hit the news with a splash earlier this year, but unfortunately isn't getting as bright as initially predicted," Gibb said, "Still, if it does brighten, we will have some viewing opportunities this winter." Local clubs are in-

involved in on-campus viewing as well, such as the St. Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS) and the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri (ASEM).

The Schwartz Observatory hosts a monthly open house March through November for evening astronomy viewing. Celestial bodies, constellations, and sites of interest will be available for viewing, as well as a viewer-based astronomy discussion afterward. Admission is free and open to the public. Amateur astronomers are encouraged to bring their own telescopes. Open house dates for the fall semester are September 14th, October 12th and 13th, and November 9th.

THE UNDERCURRENT *By Matthew Gianino*

"WHAT DID YOU DO OVER SUMMER VACATION?"



GREGORY BALLARD JR
Media Studies, Senior

"I'm looking forward to graduating, and I'm looking forward to network[ing] with other students, to possibly pursue some business endeavors"



SAMANTHA JARNAGIN
Japanese, Freshman

"Freedom. It's not going to be like high school, I've been told by many people. So I'm looking forward to that."



SARAH HAMEL
Math, Junior

"Probably just meeting all the new residents who just got here because I'm living on campus. That and more math fun."

Study Abroad Office entices students to travel

SHARON PRUITT
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Augustine of Hippo once said that the world is a book and those who do not travel read only a page. From Ireland to Ghana, the Study Abroad Office has connected the University of Missouri-St. Louis with universities all over the world, helping students to uncover the world one page – or country – at a time.

“Students who study abroad often return with a greater awareness of the global environment, have experienced personal growth, and are often more independent and confident than they were prior to departure,” Liz Shabani, Study Abroad Coordinator, said.

The SAO, located in room 261 of the Millennium Student Center, assists students who are interested in studying abroad. The Study Abroad Ambassadors Program pairs

students who are interested in studying abroad with students who already have, or with incoming exchange students from a variety of countries.

Nate Daugherty, Study Abroad Coordinator, suggests students plan early by talking with academic advisers and finding the best way to fit studying abroad into their degree plan. Students should also think about where they would like to go. The SAO’s website lists a variety of options, and Study Abroad Coordinators are available to help students search the directory and find the best program to fit their needs.

“I think the most beneficial aspect of traveling through the Study Abroad Office is knowing you have the support here at home. As a first-time traveler, it was reassuring to know that there were individuals who deal with traveling and studying

abroad on a daily basis to assist me if something went wrong,” Ericka Thomas, senior, Public Policy and Administration, said. Thomas recently attended the Irish Summer School Program at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Dr. Eamonn Wall, UMSL Smurfit-Stone Corporation Professor in Irish Studies, is faculty adviser of the program. He describes working with students abroad as the best part of his job.

“Working with UMSL students in Ireland and seeing Ireland through their eyes, I am privileged to see many Irelands that are new to me,” Wall said. Though Wall has lived in the US for thirty years, he was raised in Ireland. “Study Abroad programs take faculty out of their offices and classrooms and into the field and this is always a good thing.”

The Study Abroad Fair is

a great way for interested parties to learn more about expanding their global horizons. The fair will be held on August 28, from 10 am to 2 pm in Century Room C. Past participants and representatives from various programs will be present to answer questions.

That studying abroad is an impossibility for most students is one myth the SAO would love to put to rest.

“Some of the most memorable experiences are those working with students who never thought that Study Abroad could be a reality for them. Working with these students to establish a plan far in advance and then meeting with them upon their return is one of the most rewarding aspects of the job,” Shabani said, who went on to discuss one student in particular, a Spanish major who had never left the Midwest or spoken with a native speaker outside of the class-

room. “He participated in our Winter Intersession program to Costa Rica, returned and then enrolled in our Summer program to the Dominican Republic. It was not long until he was abroad in Chile for the semester.”

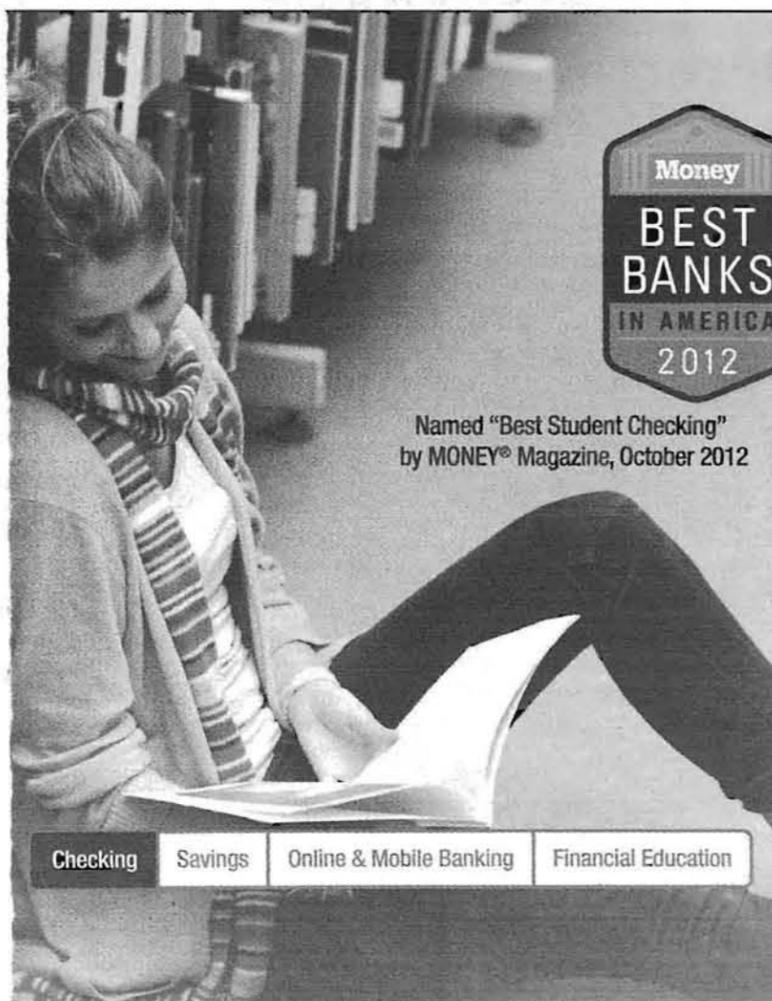
“My favorite moment so far was seeing off our seven Missouri Africa Program participants at the airport on their way to Ghana. Some of them had never flown on an airplane before, much less left the country, and here they were, braving the unknown,” Daugherty said.

With the announcement of a new partnership with the Universidad de Montevideo in Uruguay, the SAO, which is part of International Studies and Programs, is expanding their reach even further this year. The partnership marks their first semester or academic year program in South America.

OPEN HOUSE AT THE CURRENT

When: Monday, August 26, 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm | Where: MSC, Room 388

The Current is a student-run newspaper dedicated to providing reliable coverage of the UMSL campus. As an organization, we offer students real-world experience in everything from editing to ad sales. Our student staff writers and editors provide all the content of the paper and website, and our photographers, page designers, business manager and advertising departments perform all the functions of a real news publication. Come learn more about what we do at the Current and how you can get involved at our Open House event, where visitors can enjoy snacks and games. Don't miss out!



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UMSL students perform 'Die Fledermaus' at the Touhill.

SARAH MYER/THE CURRENT

Comedy, jazz, 'Rocky Horror' top Touhill

CATE MARQUIS
A&E EDITOR

The Blanche M. Touhill Performing Art Center serve the campus and St. Louis community by offering performances of surprising variety. Many Touhill shows are free or discounted for UMSL students. The theater offers a venue where UMSL dance, music and theater students can showcase and hone their skills. But the Touhill also frequently hosts productions by area professional organizations like Dance St. Louis, St. Louis Jazz and St. Louis Ballet.

Here is a sampling of some of what the Touhill is offering in September and October:

Arianna String Quartet: Out of Africa concert (September 6, 8 p.m. Lee Theater) - The Arianna String Quartet, UMSL artists-in-residence, kick off their 2013-14

season kicks with a concert of musical works the quartet specifically chosen for their recent tour of South Africa.

Beijing Opera (September 21, 8 p.m. Lee Theater) - Presented by International Studies and Programs, Beijing Opera is a traditional Chinese art that dates back to the 1790s Qing Dynasty and combines rich costumes, stylized action, singing, dialogue, mime, acrobatic fighting and dancing to tell a story.

St. Louis Jazz Orchestra: A Tribute to Maynard Ferguson (September 24, 7 p.m. Lee Theater Cabaret) - Periodically, the Lee Theater space is transformed into a cabaret, where patrons are seated at small tables and served by bow-tied wait staff for a musical performance. Such is the case for "Tribute to Maynard Ferguson." Under the direction of Jim Widner, the St. Louis Jazz Orchestra focuses

on both music of the big band era and contemporary jazz, and features top jazz artists in St. Louis, including Maynard "disciple" Jim Manley.

The Improv Shop comedy (September 25, 7:30 p.m. Lee Theater) - St. Louis' own Improv Shop is a Chicago-style improv comedy troupe. The performance features guest monologist Tom Martin. For mature audiences.

The season continues with PNC Arts Alive New Dance Horizons II (October 4 and October 5), UMSL University Symphony Orchestra's premiere of Dr. Barbara Harbach's Jubilee Symphony, commissioned for UMSL's 50th anniversary (October 9) and UMSL Department of Theatre, Dance and Media Studies' production of The Rocky Horror Show (Oct 10 - Oct 13) brings the Time Warp to the Touhill. There is more to come later in fall.

CONCERT & EVENTS CALENDAR

A sampling of some concerts & events around town.

BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY

Tuesday, August 20, at The Mad Magician, 8 p.m.

Grammy-award winning hip-hop group Bone Thugs-n-Harmony will be performing downtown for one night only. Tickets are \$35. Ages 18+

GUTTERBALLS: A BIG LEBOWSKI TRIBUTE

Friday, August 23, at Plush

Doors open 8 p.m., show at 9 p.m.

St. Louis' finest burlesque dancers, drag artists and comedians offer their reinterpretation of the Coen Brothers' cult classic. Tickets are \$15. Ages 21+

MOMMY'S LITTLE MONSTER + AMERICAN IDIOT

Friday, August 23 at Blueberry Hill

Doors open 8 p.m., show at 9 p.m.

Enjoy a double-feature homage to legendary punk bands Social Distortion and Green Day. Tickets are \$7. Ages 21+

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS

Saturday, August 24, 10 a.m.-7 p.m and Sunday, August 25, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at Tower Grove Park

This free, two-day cultural diversity event in South City features over 40 ethnic food booths, nonstop music and dance, arts and crafts, and an international bazaar selling unique gifts from across the globe. Entry free, all ages.

3RD ANNUAL SILVER BALLROOM OPEN PINBALL TOURNAMENT

Sunday, August 25, at The Silver Ballroom.

Compete against your peers over a couple of beers. Offers Match Play, Best Two Out Of Three, and Double Elimination. Tourney is IFPA Sanctioned; participants will get points for this event. 100% payback, trophies awarded. \$20 Entry Fee + coin drop. Registration 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Tournament kicks off at 1 p.m.

18TH ANNUAL BIG MUDDY BLUES FEST

Saturday, August 31, and Sunday, September 1, 1 p.m.-11 p.m. at Laclede's Landing.

This Labor Day tradition boasts over 30 blues acts on 3 stages. Enjoy eighteen hours of music in under two days from headliners like The Reverend Horton Heat, Walter Trout, and the Souldard Blues Band. Tickets are \$13 per day for general admission, \$45 per day for limited VIP seating.

LOUFEST

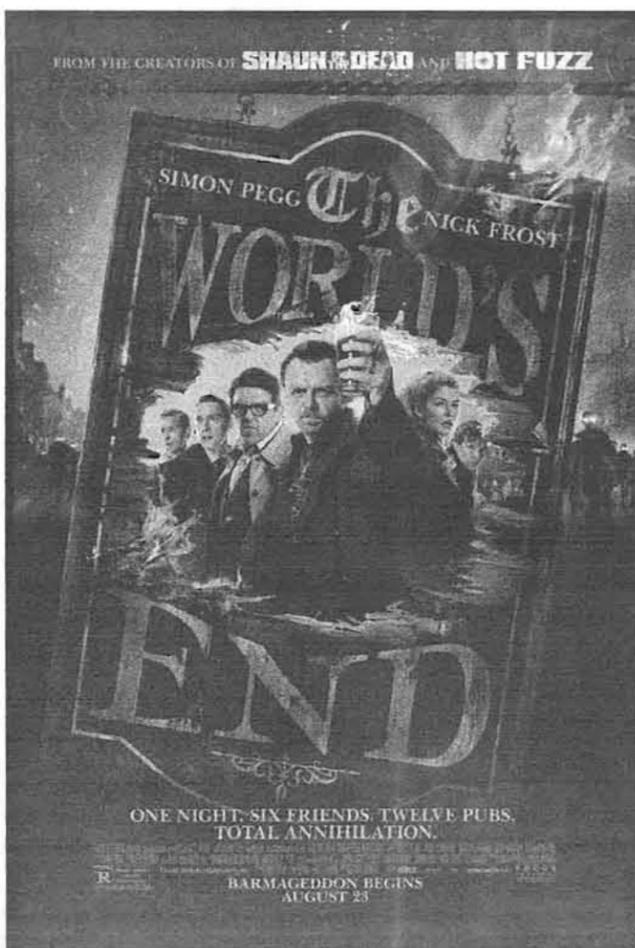
Saturday, September 7, and Sunday, September 8, at Forest Park Central Field.

This two-day party in the park features The Killers, Wilco, and local rapper Tef Poe. Dozens of vendors will be selling locally crafted clothing, art and accessories at the Art Market, while St. Louis restaurants will have food for sale in the Nosh Pit. Family friendly kid section available noon to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$95 for both days, \$55 for one-day. VIP passes \$250. Free admission for kids aged 12 and under.

ANDREW WK

Friday, September 20, at Fubar. Doors open 8 p.m., show at 8:30 p.m.

Hard-partying Andrew WK brings his high-intensity brand of rock to St. Louis. Tickets are \$20. All ages.



FOCUS The Current
FEATURES

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WORLD'S
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Passes are available on a first come, first serve basis. Supplies are limited. Limit one (1) admit-two (2) pass per person. Sponsor's employees and their dependents are ineligible. Seating at the screening is on a first-come, first-served basis and it is overbooked to ensure capacity. Please refer to passes for any other possible restrictions. No purchase necessary. This film is rated R.

TheWorldsEndMovie.com • Facebook.com/TheWorldsEndMovie

IN THEATRES NATIONWIDE AUGUST 23RD!

UMSL Sports Hall of Fame accepting nominations

ALBERT NALL
STAFF WRITER

The University of Missouri-St. Louis' Sports Hall of Fame is currently accepting applications to select former standout Triton (former Riverman) athletes, coaches, and individuals of distinguished service to be inducted into the class of 2014.

Mary Ann Mitchell, the Director of Sports Information at UMSL, said the process for nominating candidates for the 2014 class has opened. Mitchell said the committee typically chooses from among 12 to 28 nominees on an annual basis which varies from year to year.

"A dinner and reception is being planned for Friday February 7th, 2014 when those selected will be enshrined, and will be opened to the public," Mitchell said. "We will be making an announcement as to who our inductees will be in October or November."

The last class to be inducted and enshrined in the Sports Hall of Fame was the class of 2012. This group included athletes Ron Brewer (men's golf 1967-72), Lauren Glenn (wom-

en's golf 2003-2005), Ron Porter (baseball 1982-86), William Shanks (baseball, 1980-84), as well as the 1971-72 men's basketball team, the 1992 and 1993 men's golf teams and the recipient of the Marty Hendin Distinguished Service Award, Assistant Coach Chico Jones (men's basketball, 32 years).

This year, the nomination process for the Marty Hendin Distinguished Service Award will be exciting to watch. The prospective inductee will join history with one of the most prolific members of UMSL sports, former St. Louis Cardinals Vice President of Community Relations, Marty Hendin. Hendin served as the first sportswriter for the Current in the late 1960's, eventually making the position of Sports Editor and was inducted into the UMSL Sports Hall of Fame in 2003.

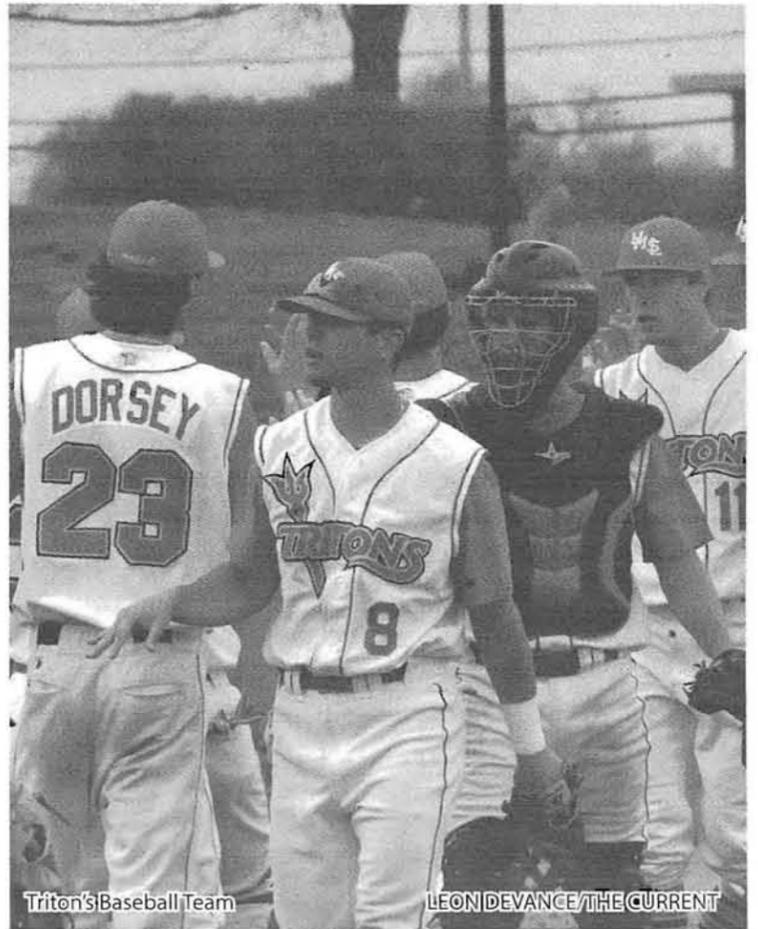
The last recipient to receive the Distinguished Service award was assistant coach Chico Jones. As an assistant, Jones had the distinction of working under five different head coaches, including Sports Hall of Famer Rick Meckfessel.

Another exciting aspect of the process is that occasionally

teams get inducted. The 2012 class included the 1971-72 men's basketball team which was the first UM- St. Louis team to qualify for the NCAA tournament with a 21-6 record during that season. Also, the 1992-93 men's golf team was entered into the 2012 class as well. The "92-93" golf squad won 4 team titles and made back to back NCAA Division II appearances.

The UMSL Sports Hall of Fame was established as a joint collaboration of Alumni Relations and the Athletic Department. The objective is to establish pride in the university's legacy in a way that shapes future success in the athletic department and in the community. The first Hall of Fame ceremony was on June 9th, 2001, when 12 members were inducted.

Students can make their picks by going to umsltritons.com where they can find the online nomination form. Students have until September 1st to submit their selections. In addition to the on-line nomination form, students can print out a PDF form and mail it to the UMSL Hall of Fame, One University Blvd, 225 Mark Twain Building, St. Louis, MO 63121.



Triton's Baseball Team

LEON DEVANCE/THE CURRENT

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POINT

COUNTERPOINT

COLUMN: LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING

Why do you hate local music?

HEATHER WELBORN
OPINIONS EDITOR

You are a college kid, so I assume you're at least a little bit into music. When was the last time you bought a single off iTunes? When did you last buy a CD off Amazon or scored some rare wax at a record store? You seem to like the music you are hearing. So why are you not showing support at a show?

When was the last time you went out to a club to see a band or a rapper? Have you ever ventured outside of how you currently experience your lyrics and instrumentals by attending live shows at local venues? If so, you very well may share in my inquiry of those who have not: why are you not showing up for shows and showing an artist support?

My position is that there are two types of audio fans: listeners and attendees.

Both camps are equally essential to the artist's longevity and success, but while the listener passively enjoys the product, the attendee physically shows his support. For the listener, the music is a private experience, enjoyed via earbuds or an auto audio system. There is an intimacy to it, a feeling of connecting exclusively to the music at the exclusion of the surrounding environment. Any avid headphone user can attest to this self-contained privacy. For many listeners, music is as essential to their daily routine as brushing their teeth. So why are so few listeners coming out to see live music?

Becoming an attendee appears almost an inevitable extension of that rather than an

alternative. The lust the listener feels for a sick drum solo or tasty lick, the downright religious experience felt after an especially well-worded verse or crunchy banger beat inspires a social response. There is a notable desire to connect to the performer, the live music over the speaker in a local venue with a few faces you recognize from your Facebook friends list. The listener's feeling are so significant, they transition to the role of attendee, and seek out tour dates to profess their audiophilia publicly. The privacy of personal listening can only pacify the attendee for so long, before they pursue a public platform to profess their passion.

The connection between fan and performer has struck me as the most profound in my decade of concert attendance. While there are joys in seeing more of this city and its historic venues, the takeaway is seeing the folks on stage, no question. With piracy making headlines printed continually, we tend to see our audio consumption as purely digital and corporate, a buyer-artist rights discussion. We ignore the real travesty, how fans refuse even an attempt to establish an audience, abandoning the acts they love in favor of the convenience and introversion of new technology.

Convenience has bred detachment. Are you a performer, or know someone who is? Ever seen an empty venue, how bad it stings to have no one show up? What about the thrill of a packed club? Do you not crave that social and creative connection to your community or to the music so essential to your life?



Japanoids at The Firebird
AHMAD ALJURYED/THE CURRENT

This is your scene, your city. This is the music you love, what excuse can you fathom to avoid shelling out under ten bucks for a few hours of memorable music? Is it not about the connection we have with the artist and fellow fan?

As any live act or performance artist will tell you, fan attendance matters, more than the likes, views and hashtags. Seeing so many heads nod for your work give performers a feeling of artistic validation. Fans have an obligation to the artist in this way. It becomes scene facilitation, something worth maintaining and investing in, something where strangers can come together for a small fee and feel less lonely for a while through music.

Do yourself a favor this week, and go see a live artist somewhere. Listen to live, local music. The artists are equipped and ready. All they are asking for are excited fans with a few bucks for cover. Is that such an unreasonable request?

Make the transition from listener to attendee this weekend. Allow yourself the opportunity to be entertained and attend a show. You can be certain you will see me there.

POINT: Snowden is a patriot

In a free country, people deserve to know. How else are we to make decisions about what kind of country we want and what kind of government oversight we will accept?

Edward Snowden did the American people a great favor when he revealed the extent of government spying and data collection by his release of NSA data. Last week, the Washington Post published an article exposing the thousands of times the NSA overstepped their legal authority. Some congressmen who supported the original USA Patriot Act are now alarmed by the scope of what the NSA is doing.

We are now having the discussion we should have had on government surveillance. Without Snowden, none of this would be taking place, because we simply would not know.

Benjamin Franklin said that people who would trade freedom for security deserve neither. The Fourth Amendment was intended to protect Americans from an intrusive government, something with which the Founding Fathers were familiar based on government abuses in Europe. Some people felt that we were giving

up a large measure of freedom with the USA Patriot Act and warned about its expansion of government powers and lack of public oversight. But the public debate on the Patriot Act largely never happened - neither when it was first passed under President Bush nor when it was renewed under President Obama.

That debate has always been hampered by the very secrecy it created.

The American people deserve the right to talk about this and make our own choice. Whether we feel that the threat of terrorism is so awful, it is worth giving up our privacy, or whether we feel that keeping our freedom from government intrusion is worth running some risk of terrorism, it should be the decision of we, the people - not a few individuals in government, elected or not.

But without the knowledge of what is being done, we cannot really even have the discussion - and we would not be having that discussion if not for the actions of Edward Snowden. In the minds of those who most treasure freedom, Snowden is a patriot.

COUNTER: Snowden is a traitor

The NSA leaks did nothing but scare an already paranoid mass of citizens and regress the level of security the United States already had reached. Project Prism is used to detect possible threats to national security. That's right. Freedom comes at the price of a super-computer hunting for alarming keywords in an ocean of text. Terrifying. Everyone's life story is already on some type of social networking website, and if you do not want the government finding out that you are cheating on your partner, then restrain yourself from sending that Facebook message. Those points aside, the government needs to hold higher standards when recruiting employees. It is vital that the government

handles our security without interference or apprehension toward the fact that a major operation may spontaneously go public. No member of the government should unveil sensitive and classified information without permission. Simply because a high ranking individual feels that a project harms the integrity of the government and the country does not make it true. Thanks to a hero, Project Prism is now a powerful tool that enemies of the U.S. can learn to circumnavigate and essentially render useless. Anymore heroes like this? Hopefully future government employees will not betray the United States government and then cowardly flee to another country.

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